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Date: December 28, 2006

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Dan Folke, Planning Director

Re: 2006 End of Year Report

2006 Building Activity – The Planning Department issued 37 building permits during December, breaking the 500 mark. Reported material costs were \$86,245 and the City collected \$4389 in Use Tax. The total number of permits issued during 2006 increased by 42% from 2005, while the amount of use tax collected increased by 55% from 2005. Building permits include new construction, additions, interior remodels, roofing, furnace and electrical permits, fences and walls. The building permit totals do not include sign or grading permits, or subdivision waivers.

	<u># of Permits</u>	<u>Reported Cost of Materials</u>	<u>Use Tax Collected</u>
2006 Totals	501	\$969,729	\$80,743
2005 Totals	353	\$887,372	\$52,123

2006 Development Review Applications - Development Review applications increased significantly in 2006 from approximately 65 public hearings during 2005 to 89 cases in 2006. Approximately 30 cases required multiple public hearings.

2006 Development Review Applications

Major Development Plans	4	Sign Variances	2
Minor Development Plans	2	Petitions to Vacate	3
Major Subdivisions	2	Subdivision Waivers	3
Minor Subdivisions	9	Concept Plans	3
Rezoning	5	Appeals	1
Conditional Uses	9	Material Change of Appearances	25
Variances	21	(exterior alteration & new construction)	
Total Cases	89		

The Development Review Process – Development Review applications are received on the Friday after the Planning Commission. Most applications are processed within a 4-6 week time frame depending on whether they have to go to City Council. Demolitions and rezonings require a two month review. The first week staff reviews each request to determine if it is complete and can be scheduled for public hearing. Often the applicant must be contacted for additional information. Staff prepares copies of the application and distributes for comments. Requests are usually sent to City Public Services, the Fire Department, the Consulting Engineer, Colorado Springs Utilities, Qwest, and Comcast. Other agencies are contacted as necessary.

Typically during the first and second week advertisements for the Historic Preservation Board and Planning Commission are prepared and sent for publication. They must be advertised at least 10 days prior to the hearing. Notification signs are prepared and posted on the project site. Development plans and subdivisions, and any other request that may have an impact on Parks and Recreation or Open Space are scheduled for the advisory boards. An analysis of the required land dedication or fees is prepared for OSAC and PARAB. OSAC typically meets during the second week and PARAB during the fourth week after the application is received.

Staff compiles the comments from outside agencies and advisory boards, then prepares a staff report with a recommendation for each request. The Historic Preservation Board typically meets during the third week after the application is received, so reports are completed and packets are prepared and distributed by Friday of the second week. The following week, reports are finalized and packets are prepared and distributed by Friday for the Planning Commission.

Planning staff writes the minutes for the Planning and Historic Preservation Commissions. Items that are heard by the City Council require separate Notice of Recommendations, which are written the week after each Commission meeting and packets are prepared for the City Council land use meeting, typically the fourth Tuesday of the month. The Friday after Planning Commission we start the process again with a new batch of requests.

Staff Accomplishments - As you can tell, processing an application requires many hours of review and preparation in order to meet the legal requirements and gather the necessary information to provide a recommendation. One of our ongoing goals is to reduce the number of cases that are continued, often because one step in the process has not been completed. Due to the number of applications we receive, delays and continuances only increase the workload and create a snowball effect. The Planning Department has been successful in reducing the number of cases continued and the majority of applications are completed within the 4-6 week time frame. This has been accomplished because of the hard work of the Planning staff.

Prior to my starting in April, Michelle Anthony and Cheri Mills worked many extra hours to review cases and prepare them for hearings. Unfortunately, for a significant portion of the rest of the year, the Planning Department was without a full time administrative assistant. Michelle has been invaluable in doing much of the work normally completed by the administrative assistant. Without her taking on these tasks, we would not have been able to process the number of applications we did during 2006.

Thank you Michelle for all your hard work and dedication to Manitou Springs!

Happy New Year - My first year in Manitou Springs has been everything I anticipated... both challenging and rewarding. We have a wonderful group of volunteers who serve on our advisory boards and commissions and dedicate large amounts of time to preparing and attending our meetings. Community planning requires community involvement, and our volunteers fill a critical role in administering the development regulations and implementing the community's vision.

The planning department will continue to find better ways to provide our services. We are anxious to fill the Administrative Assistant position as soon as possible and will be advertising the first week of the New Year. During 2007 we will complete Phase 1 of the Creekwalk Trail. We will attempt to maximize the funding for zoning code amendments, long range planning, design guidelines and GIS services, through a combination of resources. We will pursue planning grants and technical assistance in an effort to stretch our dollars for these projects. We have begun to coordinate inspections with Regional Building Department to ensure site improvements, such as grading, retaining walls, drainage, and landscaping improvements are completed as proposed. During the review process we will put a greater emphasis on water quality and storm water management, critical areas for development in Manitou.

People know there are good things happening in our community. On behalf of the Planning Department, we look forward to working with you in 2007 and wish everyone a happy and prosperous New Year.